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Letter dated 16 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the final communiqué of the twenty-fourth session of the Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States, held in Bamako on 15 and 16 December 2000 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) Moctar **Ouane**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 16 December 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Mali to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

TWENTY-FOURTH SESSION OF THE AUTHORITY OF HEADS OF STATE AND GOVERNMENT

Bamako, 15 - 16 December 2000

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

Executive Secretariat
Bamako December 2000

INTRODUCTION

1. The Authority of Heads of State and Government of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held its twenty-fourth ordinary session in Bamako, Republic of Mali, on 15 and 16 December 2000. The meeting was chaired by His Excellency Alpha Oumar KONARE, President of the Republic of Mali, current Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government.

2. Present at the session were the following Heads of State and Government or their duly accredited representatives:

- **His Excellency Mathieu KEREKOU**

  President of the Republic of Benin

- **His Excellency Blaise COMPAORE**

  President of Faso

- **His Excellency Koumba YALLA**

  President of the Republic of Guinea Bissau

- **His Excellency Dahkpanah Dr. Charles Ghankay TAYLOR**

  President of the Republic of Liberia

- **His Excellency Alpha Oumar KONARE**

  President of the Republic of Mali
  current Chairman of ECOWAS

- **His Excellency Olusegun OBASANJO**

  President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria

- **His Excellency Abdoulaye WADE**

  President of the Republic of Senegal

- **His Excellency Dr. Ahmad Tejan KABBAH**

  President of the Republic of Sierra Leone

- **His Excellency General Gnassingbe EYADEMA**

  President of the Togolese Republic

- **Her Excellency Aïssatou NJIE-SAIDY**

Vice-President of the Republic of The Gambia

- **Hon. Lamine SIDIME**

  Prime Minister of the Republic of Guinea
  representing the President of the Republic

- **Hon. Sangaré Abou DRAHAMANE**

  Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cote d'Ivoire
  representing the President of the Republic

- **Hon. James Victor GBEHO**

  Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Ghana
  representing the President of the Republic

- **Hon. Nassirou SABO**

  Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Niger
  representing the President of the Republic

- **Hon. Marly de Menezes Barbosa VINCENTE**

  Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Communities of the Republic of Cape Verde
  representing the Prime Minister of the Republic

3. The following personalities also attended the twenty-fourth session as observers:

- The representative of the Secretary-General of the Organisation of African Unity
- The representative the Secretary-General of the United Nations Organisation;
- President of the UEMOA Commission;
- Chairman, Committee of Governors of Central Banks of West Africa, Governor of the Central Bank of The Gambia.

4. The full list of participants is attached as an annex.

5. Their Excellencies President Alpha Oumar Konare of the Republic of Mali, current Chairman of ECOWAS, President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Federal Republic of Nigeria and President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah of Sierra Leone delivered keynote addresses at the opening session. The Authority decided to adopt these keynote addresses as working documents. The Heads of State and Government reiterated their commitment to reinforce regional peace and security, and to make ECOWAS an effective instrument for the promotion, development and integration of West African economies.

AFRICAN UNION

6. The Authority welcomed the signing of the Charter of the African Union during the 36th ordinary Summit of the Organisation of African Unity in Lome on 11 July 2000. The Authority appealed to all Member States which were yet to ratify the Charter to do so as quickly as possible, in order to enable the realisation of this project which is of great importance for the future of Africa.

ECOWAS PROGRAMMES

7. The Authority adopted the reports of the Executive Secretary, the 47th Session of the Council of Ministers and the meeting of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs. These reports primarily focused on the following:

- - Harmonisation of ECOWAS and UEMOA integration programmes;
- - Implementation of the ECOWAS common market;
- - creation of the ECOWAS monetary zone;
- - Sectoral programmes for production and infrastructural developemnt;
- - Health, education and information programmes;
- - Administrative and financial matters;
- - Regional peace and security.

8. The Authority lay special emphasis on economic, institutional, peace and security issues.

ECONOMIC ISSUES

Accelerating the regional integration process

9. The Authority, having considered the modalities for implementing the strategy for accelerating the regional integration process, with a view to establishing a single economic zone, decided to establish, within the shortest possible time, a customs union in ECOWAS, based on the lowest existing common external tariff in the sub-region which ranges from 20% to 0%, depending on the type of product, and on the progressive removal of all tariff barriers to intra-Community trade. To this end, the Authority directed the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to carry out a study immediately on the impact of such lower tariffs on the public finance, economies and enterprises in the member countries. The Authority also appealed to West African development partners, particularly the IMF, the World Bank and the European Union, to provide the assistance needed to carry out the studies, and to cover the costs of any budgetary and economic adjustment measures that may be necessary.

10. The Authority stressed that efforts to strengthen the political and economic dimension of integration should be accompanied by actions and measures that would consolidate the achievements of ECOWAS. The Authority directed the Executive Secretary to determine and propose specific actions to support the socio-economic development of the Community's island and landlocked countries of Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger.

Monetary cooperation programme

11. The Authority expressed satisfaction at the progress made in the monetary integration process since the last Summit held in Lome in December 1999, as witnessed by the adoption of the statutes of the second ECOWAS monetary zone and the statutes of the common Central Bank. It urged the countries concerned to intensify their efforts to achieve convergence of their macro-economic policies, with a view to facilitating the merger with the CFA monetary zone and creating a single ECOWAS monetary zone in 2004.

12. While welcoming the creation of a second monetary zone, the Authority urged the Convergence Council to reflect on whether it would be cost-effective to introduce, in the second monetary zone, a currency destined to circulate for only two years.

13. The Authority requested the Committee of Governors of Central Banks to revisit the issue of the ECOWAS exchange rate mechanism so as to enhance the practical modalities of implementing it.

ECOWAS Passport

14. The Executive Secretary officially presented prototypes of the ECOWAS passport to the Heads of State. The Authority called on all Member States to take appropriate measures to put the passport into circulation as quickly as possible.

Human resource development

15. The Authority expressed concern about malaria and HIV which are wreaking havoc among our populations, and urged Member States to take all necessary measures to implement the HIV and Malaria Control Strategies adopted by the OAU and ECOWAS Ministers of Health. The Authority issued

an urgent appeal to pharmaceutical laboratories and the international community to make drugs

available to our populations at affordable prices.

16. Recognising that today's children are tomorrow's leaders , Heads of State and Government undertook to combat all forms of violence of which they are victim, such as physical abuse, child trafficking and slavery, conscription into armed groups. They called on Member States to ratify the statutes of the International Criminal Court and to prosecute those guilty of recruiting and using children in armed conflict.

Management of water resources

17. Concerned at the fact that, despite possessing an enormous potential, West Africa suffers from acute shortage of water which affects its social and economic development, the Authority adopted a Regional Action Plan for integrated Management of Water Resources. This regional plan seeks to establish a coherent framework for coordination and harmonisation of the water resource management plans, programmes and strategies of all ECOWAS Member States.

INSTITUTIONAL MATTERS

i) **Strengthening Community Institutions**

18. In the hope of ensuring better monitoring of Community programmes and improving communications between its institutions and Member States, the Authority directed the Executive Secretary to study the possibility of appointing representatives of the Secretariat in each Member State.

19. Within the context of the restructuring of the Institutions and measures to improve their efficiency, the Authority directed the Executive Secretariat to present a detailed report at its next session. The report should set out the total amount spent on staff expenses in the Community institutions and the share of this item in the overall budget.

ii) **Court of Justice**

20. The Authority established the Community Court of Justice made up of the following members:

- Mr. Anthony Alfred BENIN Ghana
- Mrs. Hadjia Awa Nana-Amadou DABOYA Togo
- Mrs. Aminata MALLE Mali
- El Hadj Mansour TALL Senegal
- Mr. Barthelemy TOE Burkina Faso
- Mrs. Hassine Mapwaniyo DONLI Nigeria
- Mr. Soumana Dirarou SIDIBE Niger

21. The Authority decided to continue its consultations on the choice of the seat of the Court.

iii) Community Parliament

22. The Authority established the Community Parliament made up of 120 members. It decided to continue consultations on the choice of the seat of the Parliament.

iv) ECOWAS Flag

23. The Authority requested the Executive Secretariat to organise a competition among artists in the region for the design of an ECOWAS flag.

REGIONAL PEACE AND SECURITY

Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia

24. In view of the deterioration in the climate of peace and security between Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the Summit of Heads of State and Government held in-depth discussions on the issue. The Summit took due note of the undertaking by Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone that

1. each of the countries will do all in its power to ensure that the national territory is not used by national or foregin armed individuals to prepare and perpetrate attacks on neighbouring countries
2. each country undertakes to disarm any irregular armed groups present in its territory.
3. The three countries undertake as part of their joint effort to rebuild trust and restore peace, to refrain from any act or statement, in whatever form, that may appear hostile to the other party.
4. The Summit of Heads of State and Government undertook to effect the immediate deployment of interposition forces along the borders between the three countries. The Summit recommended an immediate meeting of Heads of State of the three countries under the auspices of ECOWAS and OAU.

Sierra Leone

25. The Authority reaffirmed its support for the Lome Peace Agreement signed between the Government of Sierra Leone and the RUF. Heads of State and Government called on the parties concerned to fully comply with the provisions of the cease-fire agreement signed in Abuja on 10 November 2000. They urged ECOWAS Member States, the OAU and the international community to contribute troops to UNAMSIL to enable it carry out its mission successfully.

Côte d'Ivoire

26. The Authority commended the efforts of the OAU Committee of Ten on Côte d'Ivoire, which is a clear demonstration of the desire of the whole continent to promote peace, security and democracy in a Member State. The Authority urged the Ivorian authorities to promote dialogue and reconciliation so as to ensure the effective participation of all Ivorians in the democratic process in Côte d'Ivoire.

27. In view of the grave situation, the Authority mandated the current Chairman to send a delegation of members of the ECOWAS Mediation and Security Council to Abidjan as soon as possible.

28. The Authority also condemned the loss of human life and wanton destruction of property that followed the presidential election held in November 2000. It stressed the need for an international commission of inquiry into the killings that took place, with a view to identifying those responsible for the massacres.

Senegal

29. The Authority of Heads of State and Government commended His Excellency Abdoulaye Wade , President of the Republic of Senegal, for his recent peace moves in initiating dialogue with the separatist fighters in Casamance. The Authority called on all ECOWAS Member States, particularly the neighbouring States, to uphold the peace process in Senegal.

Guinea Bissau

30. The Authority, reaffirming its commitment to the ECOWAS Declaration of Political Principles, strongly condemned the attempt to overthrow the democratically elected government of Guinea Bissau, and insisted on the need to respect constitutional order and the rule of law in order to strengthen the democratic process in that country. It also stressed the need for national reconciliation, as set out in the Abuja Agreement. To this end, the Authority urged the Government of Guinea Bissau to look into the issue of the status of former President Joao Bernardo VIEIRA, and to accord him the privileges due by virtue of that status.

31. The Authority, aware of the crucial importance of putting the Guinea Bissau economy back on track after several months of conflict, requested the donor community to, particularly the Bretton Woods institutions to lend immediate technical and financial assistance to Guinea Bissau.

COOPERATION WITH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

32. ECOWAS Heads of State and Government reiterated their gratitude to their development partners, particularly the OAU, the European Union, USAID, the ECA, the World Bank, the IMF, ITU, FAO, Japan, Canada, and Germany for the various forms of assistance they have provided in support of the

regional integration process. They encouraged the ECOWAS Executive Secretariat to resume cooperation with the ADB and to pursue efforts aimed at extending cooperation to other partners, in particular, the Scandinavian and Arab countries.

ISSUES FOR FURTHER STUDY

33. The Authority underscored the need to intensify regional cooperation and integration efforts. To this end, it directed the Executive Secretariat to organise consultations on the measures ECOWAS could take in order to carry out its mission successfully. The consultations should cover the following issues:

1. practising bilingualism within Community Institutions;
2. establishment of an ECOWAS Police Force to combat insecurity and trans-border crimes;
3. rotation of the post of Chairman of ECOWAS among Member States;
4. institutional reform: establishment of a Government of the Community with well-defined sectoral responsibilities;
5. choice of a name for the Community and designation of a capital for West Africa.

DATE AND VENUE OF THE NEXT SUMMIT

34. Heads of State and Government decided to re-elect His Excellency Alpha Oumar Konare, President of the Republic of Mali, as Chairman of the ECOWAS Authority of Heads of State and Government. The next session of the Authority will be held in December 2001 at a venue to be determined by consultations.

DONE AT BAMAKO THIS 16TH DAY OF DECEMBER 2000